



City of San Diego Development Services Department Summary of Row Homes / Townhouses Policy

2001 California Building Code: Chapter 5

Revision Date: February 10, 2003

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide a brief summary of the Department's policy for the design and construction of multiple townhouse dwelling units, when built in a row at or near property line or assumed property line, under Group R, Division 3, Dwelling occupancy classification.

Under this occupancy classification, terms townhomes and row homes are considered to be synonymous and are referred to as townhouse or townhouses hereinafter.

Under the policy, row homes are single-family dwelling units constructed in a row consisting of either a single townhouse or a pair of attached townhouses forming a duplex unit.

For comprehensive and detailed requirements for design and construction of row homes, refer to Building Newsletter [newsletter, hereinafter] Row Homes Requirements for Occupancy Classification as Group R, Division 3'.

II. DEFINITION

TOWNHOUSE is a single-family dwelling unit constructed as single unit which extends from foundation to roof. Furthermore, each townhouse shall have open space on at least two sides.

III. CONDITIONS FOR OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATION AS GROUP R, DIVISION 3

In order for multiple individual townhouses to be classified as Group R, Division 3, Occupancy, when built in a row at or near property line or assumed property line, the following conditions are required to be satisfied:

A. Each townhouse is required to be in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Building Code related to Group R, Division 3, occupancy classification.

B. Each single townhouse or a duplex shall be considered a separate and independent building.

C. Each individual townhouse must be located on a parcel of land either bounded by established and recorded legal property lines or assumed property lines or both. The site plan shall clearly show the legal property lines [lot lines] or the assumed property lines with a description of legal address for each individual townhouse and duplex.

D. Each single townhouse building or duplex building shall be separated from adjoining dwelling unit by property

line walls. Attached dwelling units in a duplex may be separated by a party wall, constructed as defined in the newsletter.

E. Townhouses shall not be stacked with one constructed on top of the other. Each townhouse must extend from foundation to roof.

F. Underground and aboveground plumbing, conduits, wiring and other utilities shall comply with the requirements set forth in the newsletter.

G. Each separate and independent building must be structurally independent in resisting both vertical gravity loads and lateral (seismic and wind) loads.

H. Each individual townhouse or duplex must have a separate means of egress.

IV. COMMERCIAL USES IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Commercial uses may be established in one- and two-story townhouses without triggering compliance with Building Code provisions associated with commercial use and occupancy group. For comprehensive and detailed requirements refer to newsletter.

V. PERMIT ISSUANCE

A. Townhouse. A separate Combination Permit will be issued for each individual townhouse when all building and zoning regulations of the City of San Diego are satisfied and complied with.

B. Duplex. A separate Combination Permit will be issued for each dwelling unit of a duplex when all building and zoning regulations of the City of San Diego are satisfied and complied with. A duplex unit will be reviewed as a duplex.

VI. ALTERNATE MATERIALS, DESIGN AND METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION

The applicant may submit to the Building Official, requesting for review and approval of an alternate design and method of construction for property line walls and means of egress system. For comprehensive and detailed requirements refer to newsletter.

For questions regarding this policy please contact Mehdi Shadyab, P.E., Senior Engineer, at 619-446-5400.

The new fee schedule and related fee increases are needed to more accurately reflect the cost of service, keep up with the increasing workload and labor costs, and hire staff for vacant positions to improve service levels. Increased costs are also associated with regulatory requirements including additions to the Uniform Building Code, energy conservation, storm water pollution pre-

vention, disabled access and environmental monitoring. Some fees, such as those for single family tract homes, will decrease.

A complete copy of the City Manager's Report detailing the fee proposal and the related attachments is available on the internet at www.sandiego.gov, select "Development Services" from the "Business" heading, then select "News and Updates." 🏠